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LETTER DATED 25 FEBRUARY 1997 FROM THE PERMANENT REPRESENTATIVE OF IRAQ TO THE UNITED NATIONS ADDRESSED TO THE SECRETARY-GENERAL

On instructions from my Government, I have the honour to transmit to you herewith a letter dated 25 February 1997 addressed to you by Mr. Hamid Yusuf Hammadi, Acting Minister for Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Iraq, concerning the continuing violations of Iraq's territory and airspace being committed by Turkish armed forces.

I should be grateful if you would have the present letter and its annex circulated as a document of the Security Council.

(Signed) Nizar HAMDOON
Ambassador
Permanent Representative

Annex

Letter dated 25 February 1997 from the Acting Minister for Foreign Affairs of Iraq addressed to the Secretary-General

I refer to my letter of 8 January 1997 concerning the continuing violations of the territory and airspace of the Republic of Iraq being committed by Turkish armed forces (S/1997/24, annex) and should like to inform you that, on a variety of pretexts, such forces are still engaging in military operations inside Iraq's territory and in its airspace. The violations reported for January 1997 are set forth hereunder.

1. On 3 January 1997 Turkish forces resumed operations and carried out a search of areas adjacent to the Ufkuzi and Huriz districts. This was accompanied by the aerial bombardment by Turkish fighter aircraft of the Kulli Harunah and Armisht areas, which are inside Iraqi territory.

2. On 4 January 1997 two Turkish aircraft bombarded the village of Baytas and Turkish artillery shelled the Mount Kirah area and the village of Sharanish Nasara inside Iraqi territory.

3. On 5 January 1997 Turkish fighter aircraft bombarded the Matin area, which is inside Iraqi territory to the north-west of Amadiyah.

4. On 6 January 1997 Turkish military units that had penetrated inside Iraqi territory began to withdraw from the border strip in the area between Ufkuzi and a point to the north-east of Bahnunah and were redeployed 1 to 2 kilometres inside Iraqi territory. They completed their withdrawal on 7 January 1997.

5. On 10 January 1997 two Turkish fighter aircraft bombarded the villages of Sinat and Qasruk inside Iraqi territory.

6. On 12 January 1997 Turkish armed forces supported by warplanes advanced from the Khabur direction into the village of Alamun, which is situated on the Khabur river inside Iraqi territory.

7. On 12 January 1997 Turkish aircraft and artillery bombarded the areas of Daryarash, Qasruk, Ahmad and Ghari, which are inside Iraqi territory.

8. On 13 January 1997 Turkish fighter aircraft bombarded Armisht, Harunah and Dargal in the Salifani subdistrict of Iraq and continued their sorties over areas in the Iraq-Turkey border strip.

9. Turkish forces released a number of Iraqi Kurdish citizens they had previously detained and took them to the Turkish town of Silopi. From there they were returned to northern Iraq.

In conveying to you the details of these Turkish violations, the Government of Iraq expresses its condemnation of such acts of military aggression. It does so because the practices of the Turkish forces, as represented by their repeated shelling of towns and villages in Iraq and their unlawful incursions into Iraqi

territory, are in flagrant violation of Iraq's sovereignty and the inviolability of its territory and airspace, just as they are incompatible with relations of good-neighbourliness, the Charter of the United Nations, the norms of international law and the 1926 Iraq-Turkey boundary agreement. These practices may also undermine stability in the region as a whole, which is suffering primarily from the anomalous situation created by the United States of America and its allies in northern Iraq.

As stated in my previous letter, the Turkish Government bears full international responsibility for the acts of aggression it commits inside Iraqi territory and for all their consequences, regardless of the alleged reasons it gives.

The Government of Iraq reserves its legitimate right under international law to seek compensation for the damage caused by these Turkish violations of its territory and its airspace and for the human suffering inflicted on Iraqi citizens by these actions. Through you, it renews its call to the Government of Turkey to reconsider its policy with respect to the situation in northern Iraq, to promote the collaboration of the two countries on the basis of considerations of good-neighbourliness and mutual respect for sovereignty and to eliminate the reasons for the persistence of a situation that jeopardizes the interests of both countries.

As, through you, I reiterate my country's call to its Turkish neighbour to respect Iraq's sovereignty and territorial integrity, I express the hope that the United Nations will meet its responsibilities as laid down in the Charter and that it will halt the intimidation and aggression to which my country is constantly being subjected.

I should be grateful if you would have this letter circulated as a document of the Security Council.

(Signed) Hamid Yusuf HAMMADI
Acting Minister for Foreign Affairs
of the Republic of Iraq